

A group of six performers, three men and three women, are dressed in traditional Phu Thai attire, consisting of blue long-sleeved shirts and trousers with red and white decorative elements. They are performing in front of a large, ornate temple building with a red roof and intricate carvings. One man in the foreground is in a dynamic pose, lying on the ground with one leg raised. Another man stands behind him, playing a stringed instrument. To the right, a man plays a long, vertical wind instrument. Two women are seated on the right, one holding a long, thin object. A young boy stands on the left, also in traditional dress. The scene is set in a courtyard with a large Buddha statue visible in the background.

Nakhon Phanom

TOURIST INFORMATION

*Phu Thai dancers and musicians
perform at Phra That Renu*

EXOTIC
Thailand



Introduction

Nakhon Phanom is a northeastern province, bordering Laos across the Mekong River, and covering some 5,312 square kilometres. The riverside provincial capital is 735 kilometres northeast of Bangkok.

Nakhon Phanom literally means 'City of Mountains', the name derived from rugged mountains behind the Laotian settlement of Tha Kaek which faces Nakhon Phanom on the opposite bank of the Mekong River.

Laotian influences are seen in Nakhon Phanom's dialect, customs, architecture and cuisine. Many unique folk dances are performed on special occasions, and the custom of extending a generous welcome to guests can be seen during the *Bai-Sri-Su-Kwan* ceremony.

Nakhon Phanom's major religious monument, Phra That Phanom, is highly revered throughout northeastern Thailand and Laos.

City Attractions

Wat Okatsribuaban

Located beside the Mekong River, next to the Indochina Market, this temple contains two highly revered and ancient Buddha images.

Wat Srithep Pradittharam

This temple is noteworthy for a beautiful ordination hall with delightful murals, and revered Buddha images, and a

statue of Luang Pu Chan, a widely respected ecclesiastic throughout Thailand's Northeast.

Riverside Promenade

This provides a clear view across the Mekong River to the Laotian settlement of Tha Kaek and its mountain backdrop which is especially scenic at sunrise, and during the late afternoon.

Terdprakiat Park & Strand

This riverside area is particularly popular during February, through April, when river water drops to reveal unspoiled sand stretching almost to the Laotian side of the Mekong. The area is a favoured spot for picnics.

Phu Kratae Golf Course

This picturesque 9-hole golf course is located at the Technical College (4 kilometres from Nakhon Phanom on the Sakon Nakhon Road) and occupies more than 80 acres of land around the Phu Katae reservoir.

Out-of-City Attractions

Renu Nakhon

Renu Nakhon is 51 kilometres south of Nakhon Phanom provincial capital, via Highway No.212 until the Km 44 marker, and Highway No. 2031. The town is best known for the **Phu Thai** ethnic minority who retain their ancient culture, namely in the form of dances and the custom of the *Bai-Sri-Su-Kwan* welcoming ceremony. Many local products, including woven cotton, are on sale at local shops.



Phra That Renu

This was built during the early 1900s to resemble the larger Phra That Phanom, and to house sacred scriptures and golden Buddha images.

Phra That Phanom

This highly revered riverside temple is located 52 kilometres south of Nakhon Phanom provincial capital on Highway No. 212, and is believed to date back more than twelve centuries. The more than 50-metre-high pagoda is one of the most revered shrines in northeast Thailand and regularly attracts pilgrims. A museum within the compound houses many ancient relics.

Phra That Srikhun (Na Kae)

Some 55 kilometres southwest of the provincial capital, this pagoda bears a strong resemblance to Phra That Phanom. The square base is decorated with *bas relief*.

Left to Right

A traditional Bai-Sri-Su-Kwan welcoming ceremony vignette, the Laotian Town of Tha Kaek as seen from Nakhon Phanom, the pagoda of Phra That Phanom, murals inside Wat Srithep Pradittharam.

NAKHON PANOM City Map

not drawn to scale



Laos



NAKHON PANOM Provincial Map

not drawn to scale

Nong Khai

Tad Poh Waterfall
Tad Kham Waterfall

Ban Phaeng

Na Thom

Si Songkhram

Na Wa

Phra That Prasit

Sakon Nakhon

Phra That Mahachai

Phra That Tha-Uthen

Tha Uthen

Phon Sawan

Muang

Pla Pak

Phra That Renu Nakhon

Renu Nakhon

Na Kae

Phra That Phanom

That Phanom

Phra That Srikhun

Dan Sao Coi

Phra Wet Cave

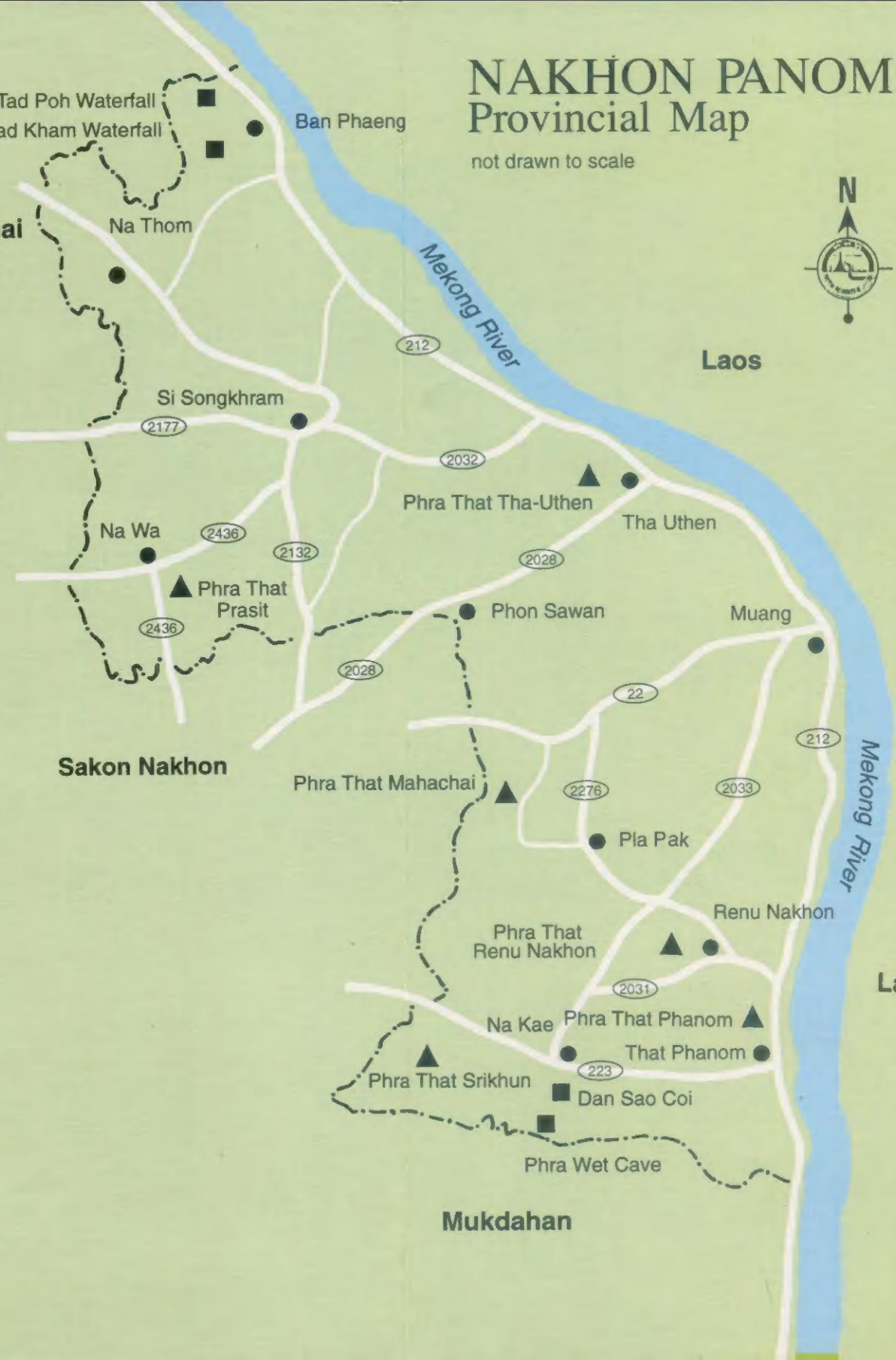
Mukdahan

Mekong River

Mekong River

Laos

Laos





Clockwise from Top Left:
*Illuminated Boats Festival scenes re-
 enacted every October, thrilling Thai-Lao
 boat races on the Mekong River, and a
 local silk weaver*
 Overleaf:
Colourful Phu Thai dancers



Dan Sao Coi (Na Kae)

This scenic viewpoint 6 kilometres from Na Kae offers panoramic views of Phra That Phanom and adjacent areas.

Phra That Tha-Uthen

This shrine, north of the provincial capital, along Highway No. 212, bears noted resemblance to Phra That Phanom. It was constructed in 1912 to house a Buddha disciple's relic which came from Yangoon in Myanmar (Burma).

Wat Triphum

This riverside temple in Tha Uthen district contains the ancient 80-inch-tall Phra Bang Buddha image which, it is believed, needs only to be paraded around town to ensure plentiful rainfall.

Phra That Prasit

This is in Wat Phra That Prasit, some 80 kilometres northwest of Nakhon Phanom provincial capital in Na Wa district.

Phu Lungka

92 kilometres northwest of Nakhon Phanom provincial capital, along Highway No. 212, and 6 kilometres from Ban Phaeng, this hill is where many streams originate. There are numerous wild flowers, orchids and trees.

Tad Kham Waterfall (Ban Phaeng)

This forest area marks the place where streams originating from Phu Lungka unite. The resultant river cascades through the multi-tiered waterfall.

Tad Pho Waterfall

2 kilometres north of Tad Kham Waterfall, this fall can be

reached only after a 30-40-minute walk. The fall can be seen from Highway 212.

Phra That Mahachai

39 kilometres from Nakhon Phanom provincial capital, along Highway 22 to Sakon Nakhon, this pagoda contains a relic of the Lord Buddha. A mural depicting the history of Buddhism adorns the walls of the ordination hall.

Special Events

Phra That Phanom Festival

This 7-day festival takes place during the full moon period of the third lunar month, generally in late February or early March, and is centred on the revered shrine. Religious merit-making, folk entertainment and native bazaars number among activities attracting pilgrims from northeast Thailand and neighbouring Laos.

Annual Illuminated Boat Festival

This occurs in the provincial capital and forms part of the celebrations marking the end of the annual 3-month Buddhist Rains Retreat. Celebrated in late October, during the period of the full moon, the 7-day festival commemorates the occasion when the Buddha returned to Earth after preaching to his mother in Heaven. People traditionally showed their respect by illuminating their boats. During the festival, there are dragon-boat races on the Mekong River, frequently featuring Thai and Laotian teams, and the festival finishes with an illuminated boat procession in which model bamboo boats are decorated with lights.

How To Get There

By Road (Self-drive)

Bangkok-Saraburi-Nakhon Ratchasima-Ban Phai district in Khon Kaen-Maha Sarakham-Kalasin-Sakon Nakhon-Nakhon Phanom, a distance of 735 kilometres via Highway No. 1 (Phaholyothin), Highway No.2, Highway No. 23.

By Bus

Airconditioned coaches and non-airconditioned buses regularly leave the Northeastern Bus Terminal on Bangkok's Phaholyothin Road throughout the day. Further details may be obtained from 279-4484-7 (air) and 271-0101-5 (non-air) in Bangkok.

By Air

Thai Airways operates daily flights from Bangkok via Sakon Nakhon. Further details may be obtained from Thai Airways in Bangkok (Tel: 280-0070-80, 233-3810).

Accommodation

A comprehensive list of airconditioned and non-air-conditioned accommodation, and restaurants, in Nakhon Phanom, can be obtained from the local Tourism Authority of Thailand office on Sunthon Wichit Road. The office is open seven days a week, throughout the year, from 8.30 AM until 4.30 PM.



Tourism Authority of Thailand

Head Office

4 Ratchadamnoen Nok Avenue
Bangkok 10100, Thailand
Tel: (66 2) 281-0422 (20 lines)
Fax: (66 2) 224-6221

Nakhon Phanom Office

18 4/1 Sunthon Wichit Road
Nakhon Phanom 48000
Tel: (042) 513-490-1
Fax: (042) 513-492